CCR

From the Desk of
Ron Daniels
Executive Director

Dear Friend of the Center for Constitutional Rights:

I fear for our nation. We stand at a crossroads where, as Congressman Ron Dellums wrote in his letter to you, what you and I do now may determine the well-being and direction of our country for decades to come.

- ✓ It may determine whether government is truly for all the people or just for the few.
- ✓ It may determine whether government policies affecting many millions of children, women, and men living at the edge will help pull them back...or push them over.
- ✓ Whether a culture of compassion and basic rights is abandoned to a truly primitive mentality of survival of the fittest and the favored few.
- ✓ Whether the rights and protections guaranteed by the U.S. Constitution endure or are devoured by the social engineers of the radical right.

I believe that the Republican Contract With America is really a contract On America, one that threatens to bury the principles embodied in FDR's New Deal and articulated so persuasively thirty years later in Martin Luther King, Jr.'s Economic Bill of Rights --

-- that all human beings who live in this country should be guaranteed the basic right to be free from poverty, hunger, disease, and homelessness;

-- that the right to a job or an income, housing and health care are "inalienable rights" that give meaning to "life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness" championed in our Declaration of Independence;

-- and that give meaning to Justice Brennan's notion that personal dignity is the fundamental value that underlies our Constitution, and to social and economic guarantees now a part of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

On January 27, 1995, the Center for Constitutional Rights launched what may be one of the most important campaigns we've ever undertaken: **Break the Contract on** America: Stand Up For Your Rights! **More than 60 local and national** organizations participated in an emergency discussion and strategy roundtable called by CCR to kick off the campaign and let people on the front lines know how CCR is prepared to help. Components of our campaign include:

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Break the Contract Legal Task Force - The need for "people's lawyers" serving individuals and organizations involved in movements for social justice and social change is greater than ever. Therefore we have organized a **Legal Task Force** of the Center's staff, board, and network of all 100 cooperating attorneys to serve movement constituents nationwide. Just as we stood alongside civil rights activists in the '60s, Native Americans at Wounded Knee and Vietnam war activists in the '70s, and sanctuary workers and other opponents of Reagan's Central America policies in the '80s, our people's lawyers will assist today's activists who intend to make direct action and civil disobedience a part of the Break the Contract campaign in the '90s.

We are cooperating with other public interest legal institutions and lawyers to mobilize the resources of the progressive legal community to develop litigation to fight the "Contract" at local, state, and federal level, such as the 3/5 majority for tax legislation, the assault on immigrants, the validation of illegally obtained evidence, the denial of equal protection to single, underage mothers, the refusal to honor our country's obligations towards the United Nations, and other policies that strike at the heart of our constitutional democracy.

Break the Contract Resource Center & Hotline - To assist with the formation of local Break the Contract networks and coalitions, we have established a Break the Contract Resource Center & Hotline to serve them. Stand Up For Your Rights!, the first pamphlet in a series of popular education materials produced for the campaign, is ready for broad distribution. A 90-minute tape of the January 27th roundtable will be available in the coming weeks. Announcements of conferences, workshops, campus teach-ins, direct action campaigns, and requests for assistance will be proccessed through the Resource Center & Hotline.

I'm sure you will agree that the Center for Constitutional Rights has a vital role to play in **Breaking the Contract on America** and in mounting a serious and sustained challenge to the radical right.

Your support in the past has made the Center such a vital, effective force in many struggles for human dignity and freedom. These extraordinary times will require an extraordinary effort from the Center. And an extra commitment from each one of us.

We need you to join with us to safeguard the letter and spirit of the Constitution and defend our imperiled democracy. As part of this good and necessary fight, we must join together and reaffirm a culture of rights and compassion, of dignity, liberty, and justice, for all.

Please make that extra effort these times demand of us, and double your contribution to the Center for Constitutional Rights, if you can. What you and I do today may determine the course and direction of our society for years and years to come.

Sincerely,

Ron Daniels

Ron Daniels
Executive Director

P.S. If you would like to receive a copy of Stand Up For Your Rights!, just check the box on the enclosed reply form.